

RE: Opposition to SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874

To Whom it May Concern and the Members of the Education Committee:

As a parent of public school students in Darien, I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that proposes forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools, as well as any bills that will penalize public schools for NOT regionalizing. The reasons for my position are set forth below.

o My husband and I moved to Darien for the schools, and quality of our school district is what keeps us here. The locally run public schools provide a nurturing environment where teacher engagement is high, student learning is individualized, and achievement is recognized.

o I have not seen any evidence indicating that regionalizing school districts will save money given the costs of combining resources and added transportation costs. More importantly, I have not seen any evidence establishing that regionalization will maintain or improve the quality of education in school districts. If such evidence exists, please publish it.

o I am worried that regionalization or the lack of local control will result in: i) larger school sizes, ii) inadequate administrative support/supervision, iii) longer transportation times for children resulting in decreased engagement, lower academic scores, and increased absenteeism, iv) a deterioration of the quality of the education, and v) reduced teacher and community engagement.

o Further, I am concerned that regionalization's erosion of the quality of the education in our local schools will effect the CT economy. If new families stop moving to CT towns because the quality of the education in the public schools has deteriorated, new businesses will not be attracted to our towns either. Moreover, existing families and businesses will leave at a greater rate than they are leaving now. This will worsen the state's fiscal crisis.

Please oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that forces regionalization of Connecticut public schools or penalizes schools for not regionalizing.

Thank you for your public service and for listening.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heather Coleman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sincerely,
Heather Coleman
Darien, CT